

RE: House Bill 5170

To: Planning and Development Committee

At: PDtestimony@cga.ct.gov

To Whom it May Concern:

While I applaud anyone who looks out for the welfare of animals and appreciate the motivation for a bill of this type, I am concerned that when one tries to draft a “one size fits all” bill to cover a very complex issue like shelter and tethering, unintended applications to responsible dog owners due to overbreadth might result that are neither beneficial to the owner or the pet.

Responsible dog owners come up with all kinds of creative options to care for their pets. Factors like the age and health of the pet, exercise needs of the pet, size, coat type, emotional state of the pet, number of hours left alone, amongst others all come into play. It is possible a perfectly adequate and safe solution developed by a loving owner will fall short of the requirements of this bill, and in order to comply the owner would have to resort to a containment method less suitable and much less desirable for the pet (for instance, confinement in a crate rather than in a larger enclosure).

You have attempted to carve out exceptions for certain performance venues, which is great, but I fear you may have missed many other situations worthy of exception – and as a result, someone who truly loves and cares for a pet may find themselves in technical violation of the requirements of this bill. Someone may create a perfectly adequate shelter or tether for the specific needs of their pet that makes that pet safe and happy, but does not satisfy all the requirements of the proposed bill.

Connecticut already has animal cruelty laws, and those should be enforced to the fullest extent to protect animals being subjected to abuse. This involves a case-by-case analysis to determine if in fact cruelty is happening, which makes sense because each situation is unique. There are always those obvious abuses that everyone would agree upon, but there are other situations where there may not be consensus (for example, the shelter required for the safety of a Chinese Crested would be significantly different than that required of an Alaskan Malamute).

To conclude, I am not in favor of arbitrary restrictions on tethering and sheltering for all the reasons outlined above. I fear this HB 5170 could actually work to the detriment of some dogs and some responsible dog owners.

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